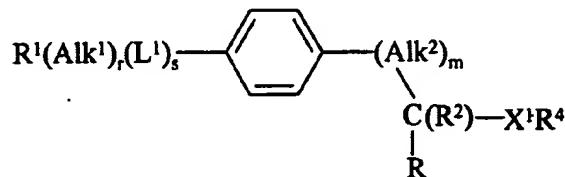


This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A compound of formula (1a):



wherein:

R is a carboxylic acid;

R^1 is an optionally substituted pyridyl group;

Alk^1 is an optionally substituted C₁₋₆ aliphatic chain or an optionally substituted C₁₋₆ heteroaliphatic chain containing one, two, three or four heteroatoms or heteroatom-containing groups chain selected from $-L^2CH_2$, $-CH_2L^2CH_2$, $-L^2(CH_2)_2$, $-CH_2L^2(CH_2)_2$, $-(CH_2)_2L^2CH_2$, $-L^2(CH_2)_3$, and $-(CH_2)_2L^2(CH_2)_2$, where L^2 is selected from the group consisting of -O-, -S-, -C(O)-, -C(O)O-, -C(S)-, -S(O)-, -S(O)₂-, -N(R⁵)-, -CON(R⁵)-, -OC(O)N(R⁵)-, -CSN(R⁵)-, -N(R⁵)CO-, -N(R⁵)C(O)O-, -N(R⁵)CS-, -S(O)N(R⁵)-, -S(O)₂N(R⁵)-, -N(R⁵)S(O)-, -N(R⁵)S(O)₂-, -N(R⁵)CON(R⁵)-, -N(R⁵)CSN(R⁵)-, -N(R⁵)SON(R⁵)-, and -N(R⁵)SO₂N(R⁵)-;

R^5 is a hydrogen atom or a straight or branched alkyl group;

L^1 is -O-, -S-, -C(O)-, -C(O)O-, -C(S)-, -S(O)-, -S(O)₂-, -N(R⁵)-, -CON(R⁵)-, -OC(O)N(R⁵)-, -CSN(R⁵)-, -N(R⁵)CO-, -N(R⁵)C(O)O-, -N(R⁵)CS-, -S(O)N(R⁵)-, -S(O)₂N(R⁵)-, -N(R⁵)S(O)-, -N(R⁵)S(O)₂-, -N(R⁵)CON(R⁵)-, -N(R⁵)CSN(R⁵)-, -N(R⁵)SON(R⁵)-, or -N(R⁵)SO₂N(R⁵)-;

r and s , which may be the same or different, is each zero or an integer 1;

Alk^2 is a straight or branched alkylene chain;

m is zero or an integer 1;
 R^2 is a hydrogen atom or a methyl group;
 X^1 is a group selected from $-N(R^3)CO-$, (where R^3 is a hydrogen atom or a straight or branched alkyl group); $-N(R^3)SO_2-$, $-N(R^3)C(O)O-$ or $-N(R^3)CON(R^{3a})-$ (where R^{3a} is a hydrogen atom or a straight or branched alkyl group);
 R^4 is an optionally substituted C_{1-6} aliphatic, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkenyl, C_{7-10} bicycloalkyl, C_{7-10} tricycloalkyl, C_{7-10} bicycloalkenyl, or C_{7-10} tricycloalkenyl group;
and the salts, solvates, hydrates and or N-oxides thereof.

2. (canceled)
3. (canceled)
4. (canceled)
5. (original) A compound according to Claim 1 wherein $-(Alk^1)_r(L^1)_s-$ is a $-CH_2O-$ or $-CON(R^5)-$ group where R^5 is a hydrogen atom or a straight or branched alkyl group.
6. (original) A compound according to Claim 5 wherein $-(Alk^1)_r(L^1)_s-$ is a $-CONH-$ group.
7. (original) A compound according to Claim 1 wherein Alk^2 is $-CH_2-$, m is an integer 1, and R^2 is a hydrogen atom.

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8. (original) A compound according to Claim 1 wherein X¹ is a -NHCO-, -NHSO₂-, -NHC(O)O- or -NHCONH- group.

9. (original) A compound according to Claim 8 wherein X¹ is a -NHCO- group.

10. (original) A compound according to Claim 1 wherein R⁴ is an optionally substituted straight or branched C₁₋₆alkyl group or an optionally substituted C₃₋₇cycloalkyl or C₇₋₁₀tricycloalkyl group.

11. (original) A compound according to Claim 10 wherein R⁴ is an optionally substituted straight or branched C₁₋₄alkyl, cyclopropyl, cyclobutyl, cyclopentyl or adamantyl group.

12. (currently amended) A compound which is:

N-Isopropaloyl-*N*-(3,5-dichloroisonicotinoyl)-*L*-4-aminophenylalanine;

N-Cyclopropaloyl-*N*-(3,5-dichloroisonicotinoyl)-*L*-4-aminophenylalanine;

N-Acetyl-*N*'-(3,5-dichloroisonicotinoyl)-*L*-4-aminophenylalanine;

and the salts, solvates, hydrates and or N-oxides thereof.

13. (original) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to Claim 1 together with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers, excipients or diluents.

14. (canceled)

15. (canceled)

16. (canceled)

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17. (canceled)

18. (canceled)

19. (canceled)